

CLAIMS

1. A storage system comprising one or more supports and, associated with the supports, one or more sensors arranged to detect the presence of transponders associated with items to be stored on the supports, to read information from the transponders, and to transmit information read from the transponders to, for example, a data processing unit.
2. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein at least one sensor is arranged to receive signals from a transponder comprising an RFID tag.
3. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein at least one sensor is arranged to receive signals from a transponder comprising a multi-bit magnetic tag.
4. A storage system according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein one or more of the supports includes an electronic character display.
5. A storage system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the supports comprise shelves.
6. An inventory control system including a storage system according to any of claims 1 to 5, and a data processing unit arranged to receive information the sensor or sensors.
7. An inventory control system according to claim 6, wherein the data processing unit is a computer system programmed to maintain a database of information about individual items held on the supports for stock control purposes and the like.
8. An inventory control system according to claim 6 or claim 7, including software to analyse the level of stock of items on individual shelves and provide a signal indicative of the requirement for replenishment of the items when the number of items falls below a pre-determined threshold level.
9. A system according to any of claims 6 to 8, when dependent on claim 5,

including means for passing information to a shelf display so as to display the prices of shelved items and/or other information, enabling price changes to be indicated substantially instantaneously when changes are made in the data processing unit.

10. A system according to any of claims 6 to 9, including means for checking the location and/or quantity of items at a given shelf location and providing an indication of misplaced items.

11. A system according to any of claims 6 to 10, including means for providing an indication of the removal of large numbers of items usually sold singly or in small numbers from a shelf location.